

**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

**ESKİŞEHİR OSMANGAZİ UNIVERSITY**

**INTERNATIONALISATION STRATEGY**

***“Vision-2-Strategy”***

***-V&S2-***

## **Introduction**

In today’s rapidly developing, changing and globally elaborate world where the fact that knowledge, ideas and individuals remain within the national borders is regarded as a disadvantage, it has become compulsory for universities to keep up with this trend, as well. The contexture of higher education institutions has to have such features as being sufficiently rapid, extrovert, open-to-collaboration and result-oriented in order to be a competitive and preferred institution, reach the required resources, have the capacity to respond and develop solutions to the societal needs and issues. Besides, universities have to make a global name for themselves to improve the total academic performance.

The internationalisation of institutions is made up of a total transformation and is realised over a long-term. The approach of institutions to this notion is shaped by the strategic priorities created after the analysis of internal dynamics, weaknesses, strengths, core values and vision.

The successful application of internationalisation strategy requires long-term determination and responsibility, a strong leadership and a properly selected international society and class. Besides, efficiently use of human resources, maintaining the required funds and effectively participating to international meetings, congresses and info-days are other requisite actions to successfully implement this strategy.

Developed with all these priorities and considerations, the internationalisation strategy of Eskisehir Osmangazi University, Vision-2-Strategy (V&S2), is a roadmap and plan which, starting from July 2021, will proceed in parallel with the priority research areas, values, vision and internal dynamics of the University and that will be improved alongside the targets specified to reach the international standards within the context of research activities and lectures of each faculty. While progressing by extending its sphere

of influence within two years, V&S2 will require a totally integrated, result-oriented and conscious approach in the University with the aim of maximising the results in terms of collective effect and visibility and being a globally well-known institution.

The strategy will yield to multiple benefits when applied in the targeted and planned way. As well as promoting both the University and Eskişehir along with the internal dynamics and advantages of the city and by this way leading not only scientific and societal researches but also multicultural projects, this strategy will also enable affiliating with knowledge networks through new strategic partnerships and eventually reaching new funding resources by taking part in international project consortiums which is one of the grounds of scientific developments and breakthroughs in the world.

Starting from July 2021, the V&S2 is going to be intensively applied for two years and has been built over four fundamentals:

1. *Enhancing Institutional Capacity for Internationalisation*
2. *Internationalisation of Education and Training*
3. *Internationalisation of Research*
4. *Gaining International Recognition*

## 1. Enhancing Institutional Capacity for Internationalisation

It is an utmost necessity that both the academic and administrative staff achieve an international vision and awareness in order to create a campus having an international character through such actions as education-training activities and the structural setups of faculties and units to be raised to the international level.

In accordance with this action which is one of the two strategic aims within the *Internationalisation Strategy Document in Higher Education* covering 2018 and 2022 and published by the Council of Higher Education (YÖK), higher education institutions should specify policies that will strengthen their organisational structures within the context of internationalisation and they are expected to take steps aimed at increasing the international quality.

Moreover, the issues of internationalisation and international students have been prioritised within the 10<sup>th</sup> Development Plan of Turkey. Within this scope, it is aimed to make the Turkish higher education system a centre of attraction for international students and researchers through diversifying higher education institutions, assigning universities with different missions and increasing their potentials and quality.

Below are the actions to do and targets aimed within Eskişehir Osmangazi University in the organisational sense also with the aim of helping eliminate the weaknesses revealed by the SWOT analysis of the YÖK.

- a. Increasing the number of courses given in a foreign language:** The lectures given in a foreign language are of much significance for the international students to prefer Eskişehir Osmangazi University. Particularly, increasing the number of postgraduate programmes given preferably in English will serve the goal of increasing the number of international students specified by the YÖK in *Internationalisation Strategy Document in Higher Education*. In order for this goal to be realised, the Erasmus Mundus Design Measures call, launched by the European Commission in 2021, will help prepare the programmes suitable for accepting international students.
- b. Increasing the capacity of researchers to teach in a foreign language:** The most fundamental and critical requirement to increase the number of programmes given in a foreign language is the existence of researchers having

the capacity and skills to be able to teach in a foreign language. Within this context, it is required that policies should be created and vocational training opportunities should be organised aimed to increase the communicational proficiency of the lecturers in the programmes planned to give courses in a foreign language. With this aim, lecturers should be provided such training opportunities through the School of Foreign Languages, Centre of Continuing Education or via other interested units.

**c. Setting-up an International Students Office:** As stated by the Internationalisation Strategy Document in Higher Education of YÖK, one of the primary goals of internationalisation acts is to increase the number of international students studying in Turkey. The fact that the number of these students increases brings about significant workload and requires some organisational preparations in order to deal with them and their potential needs. Within this direction, it is planned to set up an exclusive *office for international students* within the Directorate of Student Affairs and it is aimed that all the issues related with international students from registration to receiving residence permit will be handled by this office. The main responsibilities of this office will be attending virtual fairs and promoting the University, organising info-days for new or existing international students with the aim of specifying their needs, establishing collaboration partnerships with such stakeholders in the city as Directorate of Migration Management for residence permits, Directorate of City or State Hospitals for health reports and Directorate of National Education for the diploma equivalency certificates. Through these setups, the necessary infrastructure for the integration and adaptation of international students to the city and the University will be handled.

## **2. Internationalisation of Education and Training**

One of the main responsibilities of us is to provide our students the skills and competence they need in today's world in order to become active, self-confident and extrovert individuals, scientists, researchers or experts who are willing to go international throughout their career. Within this context, the students will be encouraged to participate Erasmus+ mobilities and the quality and quantity of the inter-institutional agreements of the departments are aimed to be increased. Besides, it is of

significance that the departmental coordinators inform the students about the procedures, encourage them to participate in the programme and help them through the process. Moreover, the agreements of the departments should be signed with the appropriate counterparts in accordance with the learning outcomes of the curriculum of the department. For this aim, the departments should specify the international partner themselves and all the process should be carried out in a coordinated manner with the International Relations Office.

Besides these goals, it is considered as an important step that researchers and lecturers within the departments should attend teaching mobility within the Erasmus+ programme with the main of increasing the international recognition of Eskisehir Osmangazi University. The partnerships established through these mobilities will help increase the international recognition of the University, pave the way for joint research projects and scientific researches and help join the project consortiums. For this goal to be realised, the management of all the departments should start the necessary initiatives and encourage the lecturers/researchers and research assistants to attend to the teaching and learning mobilities, respectively. The applications and activities carried out within the staff mobility will reported to the Rectorate by the International Relations Office for the upper management to examine the realisation extend of this objective.

### **3. Internationalisation of Research**

The international partnerships are of much significance for the founding of research collaborations and reach the best scientific results by this way. Within this context, the participation of lecturers and researchers to the international congresses, conferences, project markets, networking meetings and info days organised by the European Commission with the purpose of obtaining more efficient results bears much importance in terms of not only increasing the international recognition of the University but also promoting themselves for their own careers. The potential collaborations that will set up during these activities with a proactive approach will enable the possibility of working with worldwide researchers and world-class research infrastructure.

The world's largest research-development and innovation funding programme carried out by the European Commission, Horizon Europe will be implemented for seven years starting from 2021 and it includes many opportunities for research actions. Being a

part of the project team and consortiums will provide not only a precious contribution to the career of the interested researchers, but it will also contribute to the international prestige of the University. For this reason, it is necessary to increase the number of proposals submitted to this programme that funds worldwide research actions particularly in engineering and medicine. Moreover, the fact that countries like Turkey whose the number of project applications remained lower than expected during the previous programme is planned to be prioritised during the implementation period of Horizon Europe programme to widen the participation is of critical significance to maximise the opportunities and advantages. For this reason, it is very much importance that the responsible bodies within the University organise promotional activities about this funding mechanism and calls opened, organise proposal preparation events given by experts, introduce the promotional supports given by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TÜBİTAK) and get the researchers benefit from these services and increase the number of expert staff related to this programme.

#### **4. Gaining International Recognition**

Being one of the most important pillars of the internationalisation strategy, the main objective of international promotional activities is to make Eskişehir Osmangazi University a well-known and recognised international institution and a centre of attraction for 'promising students' living in the target countries and regions.

With the purpose of being a globally competitive, recognised and preferred university, the successful implementation of the previous three steps within this strategy will directly serve the fourth and last step and there will be a circular strategy that continuously renews and feeds itself. Being the last step of the strategy, setting-up thematic collaborations with selected partners and the existing ones will contribute to the international recognition of the University.

The target countries for the collaboration have been carefully selected in accordance with those specified by the YÖK with the contributions of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of National Education. These countries have been divided into two categories within this strategy. The first group is composed of such developed countries as the members of European Union, People's Republic of China, South Korea and the United Kingdom. The second group is constituted by Afghanistan, Albania and Azerbaijan

with whom the collaboration opportunities are still being discussed, Indonesia, the Republic of North Macedonia, all the Turkic Countries and the Erasmus+ KA171 partners such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ghana, Kosovo, Russia, Tanzania, and Ukraine. While setting-up partnerships with these target countries and regions, it is of significance that the main point of collaboration is made clear for the long term implementation of the collaboration. The types of collaboration with the institutions from these target countries could be set up in such forms as project partnerships based on R&D activities, academic collaborations with the purpose of knowledge and experience transfer within education and training, double-diploma programmes or mobility partnerships based on Erasmus+ KA171 programme.

Along with becoming a preferred institution especially by the young people from Central Asia, Middle East and Africa (Region 2), Eskişehir Osmangazi University has started to become a preferred university over the global scale. With the purpose of maintaining this reputation and increasing the preference potentiality, all the academic units have to develop their own international targets. That fact that Erasmus+ KA171 programme is promoted throughout the University and the number of project proposals increased by the academic departments bears much importance for the realisation of goals within the strategy.

The potential partnerships with the developed countries mentioned above (Region 1) carries much significance than thought since the institutions from these regions could provide experience sharing and knowledge transfer within the fields of higher education practices and scientific research. The collaboration with the universities from these countries will help us reach our own strategic goals.

Since the maintaining of these partnerships requires an expert level of knowledge, it is significant that these types of initiatives will be carried out in collaboration with the International Relations Office. The 'academic collaboration developing experts' within the office will carry out lobbying activities in favour of the University and will attend the virtual or face-to-face meetings or fairs within these countries as well as promoting the University. The academic departments will provide recommendations about the potential partners from target countries and after checking the positive suitability of these institutions for the partnership, the experts within the International Relations Office will take the responsibility to make the first contact. When the first correspondence has

reached a specified level of maturity, the relevant academic department will be involved to decide the subject and content of the collaboration.

It is also a required action to carry out promotional and branding activities. All the staff of Eskişehir Osmangazi University has to give particular importance to the sense of organisational belonging in all the international events and besides making interviews or having meetings for their own career, they should exercise due diligence to promote their University.